


COUNTRY DATA: FRANCE: Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

Although ultimately a victor in World Wars I and II, France suffered extensive losses in its empire, wealth, manpower, and rank as a dominant nation-state. Nevertheless, France today is one of the most modern countries in the world and is a leader among European nations. Since 1958, it has constructed a hybrid presidential-parliamentary governing system resistant to the instabilities experienced in earlier more purely parliamentary administrations. In recent years, its reconciliation and cooperation with Germany have proved central to the economic integration of Europe, including the introduction of a common exchange currency, the euro, in January 1999. At present, France is at the forefront of efforts to develop the EU's military capabilities to supplement progress toward an EU foreign policy.

GEOGRAPHY

Location	Metropolitan France: Western Europe, bordering the Bay of Biscay and English Channel, between Belgium and Spain, southeast of the UK; bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Italy and Spain French Guiana: Northern South America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Brazil and Suriname Guadeloupe: Caribbean, islands between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, southeast of Puerto Rico Martinique: Caribbean, island between the Caribbean Sea and North Atlantic Ocean, north of Trinidad and Tobago Reunion: Southern Africa, island in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar
Area	643,427 sq km; 551,500 sq km (metropolitan France)
Climate	Metropolitan France: generally cool winters and mild summers, but mild winters and hot summers along the Mediterranean; occasional strong, cold, dry, north-to-northwesterly wind known as mistral. French Guiana: tropical; hot, humid; little seasonal temperature variation. Guadeloupe and Martinique: subtropical tempered by trade winds; moderately high humidity; rainy season (June to October); vulnerable to devastating cyclones (hurricanes) every eight years on average. Reunion: tropical, but temperature moderates with elevation; cool and dry (May to November), hot and rainy (November to April).
Natural Resources	Metropolitan France: coal, iron ore, bauxite, zinc, uranium, antimony, arsenic, potash, feldspar, fluorspar, gypsum, timber, fish. French Guiana: gold deposits, petroleum, kaolin, niobium, tantalum, clay.
Total Renewable Water Resources	189 cu km (2005)
Freshwater Withdrawal	33.16 cu km/yr (16%/74%/10%)

Natural Hazards	Metropolitan France: flooding; avalanches; midwinter windstorms; drought; forest fires in south near the Mediterranean. Overseas departments: hurricanes (cyclones); flooding; volcanic activity (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Reunion).
Environmental Issues	Some forest damage from acid rain; air pollution from industrial and vehicle emissions; water pollution from urban wastes, agricultural runoff.
PEOPLE	
Population	64,768,389 <i>Note: the above figure is for metropolitan France and its four overseas regions; the metropolitan France population is 62,814,233 (July 2010 est.).</i>
Ethnic Groups	Celtic and Latin with Teutonic, Slavic, North African, Indochinese, Basque minorities. Overseas departments: black, white, mulatto, East Indian, Chinese, Amerindian.
Religions	Roman Catholic 83%-88%, Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%, Muslim 5%-10%, unaffiliated 4%. Overseas departments: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, pagan.
Languages	French (official) 100%, rapidly declining regional dialects and languages (Provençal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, Flemish). Overseas departments: French, Creole patois.
Literacy Rate	99%
Major Infectious Diseases	HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.4% (2007 est.) 
GOVERNMENT	
Type	Republic
Independence	4 October 1958 (Fifth French Republic established).
Constitution	Adopted by referendum 28 September 1958; effective 4 October 1958; amended many times. <i>Note: amended concerning election of president in 1962; amended to comply with provisions of 1992 EC Maastricht Treaty, 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, 2003 Treaty of Nice; amended to tighten immigration laws in 1993; amended in 2000 to change the seven-year presidential term to a five-year term; amended in 2005 to make the EU constitutional treaty compatible with the Constitution of France and to ensure that the decision to ratify EU accession treaties would be made by referendum.</i>
Legal System	Civil law system with indigenous concepts; review of administrative but not legislative acts; has not accepted compulsory International Court of Justice jurisdiction.
ECONOMY	
Agricultural Products	Wheat, cereals, sugar beets, potatoes, wine grapes; beef, dairy products; fish.
Industries	Machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics; textiles, food processing; tourism.
Import commodities	Machinery and equipment, vehicles, crude oil, aircraft, plastics, chemicals.
Import	Germany 19.41%, Belgium 11.61%, Italy 7.97%, Netherlands 7.15%, Spain 6.68%, UK 4.9%, US 4.72%, China 4.44% (2009).

Partners	
Export Commodities	Machinery and transportation equipment, aircraft, plastics, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, iron and steel, beverages.
Export Partners	Germany 15.88%, Italy 8.16%, Spain 7.8%, Belgium 7.44%, UK 7.04%, US 5.65%, Netherlands 3.99% (2009).
Per Capita GDP	\$32,500 (2009 est.)
Population below poverty line	6.2% (2004)

*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.